



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





Bt from Lays

101
c
Please write shelfmark below and return
to Mr. Hindle
2699.2.394(1-12)

RIZE POEM.

THE
RIG O' SLITTRICK'S
ST ADDRESS

TO
FRATES, TOWN-COUNCIL, AND
ABITANTS OF HAWICK.

BY
JAMES DOUGLAS,
THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE.

This mony a year I've stood the flood and tide.
BURNS.

SECOND EDITION.

HAWICK:
PRINTED BY ROBERT ARMSTRONG.
1851.



THE
AULD BRIG'S
LAST ADDRESS.

I.

YE Magistrates o' Hawick, and a'
Ye dwellers therein, grit and sma',
Since nane prevails that pleads my plea,
And I am doomed nae mair to be,
It might, if not frae sorrow free me,
At least some consolation gie me,
If, in the day o' my distress,
Ye deigned to list to my address :
A last fareweel, though it hae nought
O' language learn'd, or lofty thought,
Possesses, ne'ertheless, a clause,
That weel might mak the proudest pause
A little while, at least, till they
Think how a' that they here survey

A

Maun, like themselves, get sim'lar cast,
And rest on ruin's lap at last.

II.

But if I lang and loud should whine
Anent the fate that now is mine ;
For weel I wot it wadna serve
To make ye frae your purpose swerve :
And if, O ye—ye population,
Haudin' on earth sae marked a station,
And, busy a' as bees, show forth
Alike your honour, wealth, and worth,
Should I, e'en now, somewhat inherit
Your ain proud independent spirit,
A portion o' Auld Scotland still,
'Tis better that I should fulfil
My destiny in your ain trim,
Than in my venerable years
I, baby-like; wi' een that swim,
Should sigh and sab to move your tears.
Duty, when done to ane and a',
Will let nae head dishonoured fa'.

III.

Through years and ages long gane by,

Unchanged, 'mid many changes, I
 Hae stood, and still as lang might stand
 As ony brig in a' the land.
 Nor can it e'er be said by man
 That I, a feckless stream o'erspan,
 Whilk canna, when the tid may tak it,
 Kick up as rare and rough a racket
 As ony stream that fit may ford o'er
 Frae Johnny Groat's unto the Border.

IV.

They sing the Ayr and Doon, and clatter
 'Bout Logan, Clyde, and Gala-water ;
 But these, nor Yarrow, Tweed, or Ettrick,
 For speed and power, can match the Slittrick
 When elements positions shift,
 And pit it fairly in the tift ;
 Roaring wi' might and mad ado,
 Its wild green upland valley through,
 They well might deem that they did see,
 What it conceived itsel' to be
 In its impulsive elevation,
 The *jug'lar vein* o' the creation ;
 And that its fame depended on
 A bold uninterrupted tone.

V.

When winters wild, wi' sudden thaws,
Hush'd frae the hills the melted snaws ;
(And winters in my day hae been,
Sic as nane living now hae seen) ;
When ilk bit syke wad cast a caper
Wi' drumlie broo, and ice, and lapper,
Till rills were into rivers swollen,
And rivers aped the seas o' Hollan'—
Or when the skies in summer days,
Wad sicken in the sultry rays ;
And o'er high hill, and hollow glen,
Round Liddle-head, and Penchrise-pen,
The Carter, Windbrough, and Hawkhouse,
The dark cluds wad themsel's amass,
Casting, as if on a' beneath,
The shadow o' the vale o' death ;
Then I could ken—and man and woman
Kenn'd weel as I did—what was comin',
Soon as the sun had ceased to shed
His downward rays, as streamers red,
Into the hollow glens below,
Nor mair himsel' his fae could show,
But sink involved amid the gloom
Foreboding as the day o' doom,—

And fitfully the angry breeze
 Wad wake, and flutter thro' the trees,
 And by the thunner-bolts were riven,
 The vapours on the breast o' heaven—
 O then, the ane least skilled might say,
 What Hawick wad suffer on that day,
 And what was fitted best to bear
 The waters that wad soon be here.

VI.

Still, gath'ring strength frae glen and moor,
 The Slittrick wad its vengeance pour,
 Uprooting trees by bank and brae,
 Where'er it met them on its way :
 And on its tide, borne from afar,
 Wi' rumbling rocks frae cleugh and scar,
 Wad deepen still, and rough as deep,
 Assail me in its onward sweep,
 As if it had design at once
 To hurl me headlong frae my stance ;
 But my foundation-stane was laid
 By ane that leant to higher aid
 Than sic as build, wi' foolish hand,
 Their brigs and houses on the sand.

VII.

Wha hasna heard how I withstood
 That whilk they ca't "The great * Hawick Flood?"
 Ah me! I mind—as weel I may—
 The consternation o' that day
 When Nature, as from ambushade,
 Broke forth to ride a Border-raid,
 And Hawick was doomed to bear the brunt
 O' what her powers let loose upon't.
 For days before nae rains mair than
 Upon that day itsel' had fa'n,
 At times the passing cluds wad drop
 A skiff o'er vale, or mountain top,
 As if the fingers o' one's han'
 They had escaped while onward drawn,
 And gathered others most profuse
 To some strange place of rendezvous,
 I wot not if in heaven or earth,
 Or baith, but madly came they forth
 Wi' energy before unknown,
 As if this world that they were on
 They'd carry wi' them—let a-be
 An auld and time-worn brig like me.

* 5th August, 1767.

As thus the Flood rushed rapid by,
 And did my pier and flanks assail,
 The natives trembled mair than I,
 And thro' dismay itsel' grew frail ;
 All human aid could nought avail,
 And overwhelmed were human hopes,
 As eddying roun' some chimley-tops
 The waves wi' water-rack were borne,
 And caulds and causeways up were torn.

VIII.

*Lawrie, that honest man o' God,
 Deeming it judgment sent abroad
 Frae heaven direct because o' sin,
 Collected folk the kirk within,
 That they might—as is oft the way,
 When they can do nae better—pray.
 But as for me, it weel was kenned,
 Scathed only was my eastern end,
 Though reared when Alexander Second,
 (And rightly is the matter reckoned),
 Sat honoured on the Scottish throne,
 And still repairs had needed none :

• The Minister of Hawick.

But ah ! how different me unto
 Were feelings then, frae what they're now ;
 I sigh to think wi' what o' care,
 The Magistrates preferred their prayer
 To bold Buccleuch, to get me righted,
 Nor was their kind petition slighted.

IX.

Sic days as I hae seen, ah me !
 I fear the world will nae mair see ;
 Nor yet sic men as I hae seen
 Passing my parapets between :
 My stanes the steps o' those hae borne,
 By which they gloried to be worn,
 Whose very name my heart enamours,
 Frae Gawin Douglas down to Chalmers,
 And who, if here at this same hour,
 I trow wad little praise the poor
 Utilitarian disposition
 That thus has doomed my demolition.

X.

It seems nae weel, though wealth abound,
 When naething by the heart is found,
 Within the land that gave it birth,

Which binds it to its native earth.
 What man is he whose soul can hold
 Nae guerdon greater than his gold—
 In realms of life and nature find
 Nae truer treasure for the mind
 Than that which from it perish may,
 Ere life itsel' hae passed away ?
 Oh ! if there's ane whose eye can see
 Nae beauty in antiquity,
 When through the shadowy past appears
 The ven'erable of days and years,
 And from Association's wing
 Can take nae boon that she may bring,
 Nor feel the heart itsel' grow warm
 Amid each consecrated charm :
 May honest Hawick ne'er such a one
 Need to acknowledge as her son !

XI.

Though I'm too proud to mak petition
 To spare me, yet a disposition,
 Forgiving still for a' that's past,
 I fain wad cherish to the last ;
 But aft the proud feels sarest wae—
 And sae it seems wi' me the day,

B

If, in a land that aye was free,
 And o'er a stream that bears the gree
 Aboon a' others, I hae stood,
 And in my day done what I could
 To play the part to me assigned,
 To quit it, I feel ill inclined ;
 The bonnie hills and holmes aroun'
 My ain proud border-borough-town,
 When morning lifts its dewy ee,
 Or e'ening fa's, nae mair I'll see,
 Nae mair, as wont, I'll aught avail
 The brisk braw lads o' Teviotdale,
 Nor o'er the tide o' Slittrick bear
 The daughters o' the land sae fair.
 How oft wi' shoon as black as slaes,
 And ankles tight, wi' hose on these
 As white as was the hawthorn's flower,
 They'd lightly trip my pavement o'er—
 The hempies, too, when young and glaickit,
 And strung in bands, like gems colleckit,
 For a' their beauty and their grace
 Pitched at my Patroness's face *

* A female head, carved in stone, underneath one of its arches.

The pebble stanes.—* Daft Robie's joy
 Was aye to aid them in sick ploy,
 And, by the hand, stay feet sae sma',
 Amang the rocks when like to fa';
 It wasna that they meant to scathe me,
 But just the pride to be aneath me,
 Delighting that my arches free
 Gae back the echoes o' their glee.

XII.

My Patroness—ah! but for her
 How mony had been left to err,
 How mony frae the House o' God
 Had stayed to take anither road,
 And find excuse—'tis easy found
 When waters without brigs abound :—
 She reared me when o' these were few—
 True to hersel', to heaven true ;
 For it was chiefly to her care

* Dr. Oliver of the Navy, who was sun-struck in India, and continued insane. He passed most of his time among the children on the rocks about the Bridge. He resided with his mother, who had property in the neighbourhood, an eccentric old woman, whose word was law in her circle, on which account she got the title of "Jeanie my Lord."

That a' might reach the House o' Prayer
 Upon that day, which God saw best
 To bless, that He might make us blest.
 How oft yon funeral bell has chim'd,
 Since first the fit o' man o'er me,
 Wi' tottering step, and troubled mind,
 Bore on the idol o' his e'e—
 Some playfu' toddlin' sweet wee bairns;
 Some hopefu' youth, or maiden dear;
 Some hoary parents loved remains—
 Ilk e'e maun drap its ain saut tear.
 And O! what countless bonny brides
 Hae tripped o'er me wi' smiling faces,
 A clear the sky aboon their heads,
 They look'd e'en fairer than the graces!
 Nae care, nae shadow o'er life's path
 Sae fair, sae bright was face o' nature;
 There's neither fear o' grief, nor skeath,
 When hearts are bound wi' love's saft fetter.

XIII.

In that Kirk-yard, in mony a raw,
 Hae mouldered hearts without a flaw,
 Hearts, some o' whilk were e'en sae crouse
 As to gainsay proud Claverhouse,

And rather wad in ward be thrawn
 Than shaw the gait to sic a man,
 Or wi' the serfs o' * Pilstown rin,
 For Hawick has had mae Habs than ane.
 † Hab, honest man ! how oft thy feet
 Hae paced me o'er frae silver-street ;
 They tell the tale o' thee and James
 As if ye had nae greater claims
 To wit and worth. How much to blame
 Are they who rest on this thy fame.
 Did men delight in ancient glory,
 I'd tell o' thee a better story.

XIV.

When backward far I cast mine eye,
 Grief I forget amid my joy,
 Recalling scenes that I hae seen,
 And bouts that in my day hae been ;

* Pilstown was the commander's name of a persecuting regiment that came by Hawick on their way to Lauder: some of the men of Hawick, who were ordered to convey their baggage, and for which they were to be paid, refused to do so, and the authorities of Hawick cast them into prison to be kept there at their will.

† See Wilson's History of Hawick.

When bonfires bleezed on ilka side
 O' Slittrick at the May-day tide,
 Commemorating rites begun
 By those who worship paid the sun,
 That he propitiously might shine
 Henceforth on flocks, and corn and kine.
 What gallant fetes, and gladsome glee,
 Lit up the frolics o' the free!
 And what though rivalry might close
 At orra times these freaks wi' blows?
 'Twas but to let us understand
 The spirit o' our border land.

XV.

The doughty * Douglas—even he
 They styled the flower o' chivalry,
 Paraded wi' his proud array
 'Lang me on that eventful day,
 On which he wi' him bore in rage
 Dalhousie to the Hermitage,
 Frae aff the bench o' justice ta'en

* In 1342, Sir Alexander Ramsay of Dalhousie, Sheriff of Roxburghshire, is surprised on the seat of Justice at Hawick by Sir William Douglas, the Knight of Liddesdale, carried to the dungeon of Douglas's Castle of Hermitage, and there suffered to die of want.—*Annals of Hawick*.

To gie him justice o' his ain.
 They had been guarded weel and bold,
 And played the game wi' proud avail,
 In those the gallant days of old,
 Who could frae Douglas wrest and hold
 The Sherraship o' Teviotdale.

XVI.

Hawick better lo'ed sic needfu' rows
 As cowed the English band at Trowes,
 (Where its brave sons the flag they pride in
 Bore off to grace the Commonridin'),
 Or that, in whilk to balk their foes
 When they could reach them not wi' blows,
 They set their ain gude town a-low
 As patriots lately did Moscow.
 Than losin' a', exceptin' fame,
 In Flodden's fell and fatal game;
 Yet when our youths marched to the fray,
 Proud were their purpose and array,
 Then fathers hoar prayed in their heart,
 That each might nobly play his part,
 And maidens shed the secret tear,
 While thinking 'mid their hope and fear,
 Of lover lost, or glory won,

And many a mother blest her son,
 In pride, solicitude, and pain,
 That never saw his face again.

XVII.

Whan wearily the streams wad flow,
 And sad was Nature a' and still,
 When the dewes were deep, and the winds were low,
 And the star of eve cam' o'er the hill,
 Ah! weel might there be heard a moaning,
 Throughout the land "on ilka loaning,"
 The young, the bravest, and the best,
 Afar and cauld on Flodden lay,
 And there, alas! amang the rest,
 The FLOWERS o' HAWICK were wede away.

XVIII.

Sing to the soil, sing to the sea
 The songs of dark adversity;
 The glories o' the land are gane,
 And lang I'll no be left alane,
 Either to ornament or aid,
 Or back the boastings that I've made.
 What boots it that I graced hae been
 By Mary Stuart, Scotland's Queen,

And of our land the forms as fair
 As ever moved in mountain air ?
 That over me hae paced the proud,
 The kind o' heart, the great and good ;
 The bow-man in his green and gold,
 Bishops, and lords, and barons bold ;
 The doom is passed, and I maun fa'
 To be nae mair, * elm-tree and a' :
 The land is prone to sweep away
 Ilk vestige o' a former day.

XIX.

And when I shall nae mair remain,
 Yon sacred pile may next be ta'en,
 That rises loftily amid
 The dwelling-places o' the dead :
 If first be torn not by the plough
 The ancient bonny green Moat-Knowe ;
 For sair I fear it, too, maun fall,
 Though reared by hands Druidical.
 There, often seen in other days,
 The fairies flisked a thousand ways,
 When, on their palfreys, they wad soon

* I well remember an elm-tree growing out of the Bridge between the arches, which was cut down some years ago.

Frae Lynnwood skip, and Whitlaw-braes,
 Beneath the soft-eyed summer moon :
 It fears me that baith moon and sun
 Will soon shine on our town as one
 That is an utter upstart : not
 A relic will remain to draw
 The passer's eye-sight to the spot
 That speaks of other days—But ah !
 Had some been here that now are gane,
 Nane daured o' me to touch a stane,
 Even in the * Tranties, wi' their beggars,
 The spoilers had found fearfu' fleggers.
 Could Jean my Lord lift up her head,
 Or † Clinty fling his arms abroad,
 Or ‡ Caleb rise to beat the drum,
 And I cry out, " They come ! they come !"
 They'd cowed the bauldest o' the town
 That lifted hand to pit me down.

* *Tranties*—two old women who kept a lodging-house for Beggars, in the vicinity of the Bridge, for the period of thirty years.

† Clinty, an old eccentric tailor, cousin to Jeanie my Lord. He lived at the west end of the Bridge, and was particularly attached to it, and all the ancient objects and traditions of the town.

‡ Caleb Rutherford, the town-drummer.

Nor wot I, if to hear me mourn,
 Sir Walter e'en wad hae himsel'
 Forborne to blaw his forest-horn,
 And wag his hazel cudgel well.
 Alas ! I hear the hammer's sound,
 At ance my sentence is fulfilled,
 The die is cast, by fate I'm bound,
 Since man my destiny has willed.
 Ye twinkling stars that gem heaven's arch,
 Ye sun and moon that walk the sky,
 Nae mair my shadow shall o'erstretch
 The playful stream that murmurs by.

XX.

But it is o'er—ye Magistrates,
 And each that on your mandate waits,
 I ken there's little joy at heart,
 When nane stands up to tak my part.
 I bear to you, nor yours, ill-will,
 And frankly can forgie ye still,
 For though mine end about ye bring,
 Ye yet hae done a noble thing,
 That ye would thus the bards invite
 Of me memorials to sing :
 For of a' men that records write

The minstrels and their minstrelsy
Through time will ne'er forgotten be.

XXI.



Then roll ye years and ages on,
There aye is something to atone
In ilk mishap that may befa',
And whilk still better is than none,
Even though the meed should be but sma':
Defiance sets aside the proud,
And kindness greets and loves the good,
Virtue rewards by rendering free,
And song gives immortality ;—
And though departed are the men
That might have honoured me, what then ?
Though Leyden, Pringle, Hogg, and Scott
Hae stood enchanted wi' the scene,
Viewing frae aff this central spot
Auld Hawick, its hills and valleys green ;
Yet Riddell lives, whose magic lay
May spread my fame as well as they,
And sing my fate and age, when I
Have vanished from the gazer's eye.

SEPTEMBER, 1851.





